

Our Mission. Your Mobility.

Idaho's 2033



## Technical Report 21

# Partnerships

August 12, 2009

## Introduction

In 2007, ITD established a strategic planning team to update the department's mission, vision, and strategic plan. The goal of this effort was to clearly articulate key focus areas within the department to help guide staff. The department subsequently adopted the following mission and vision statements.

**Mission:** *Our mission. Your mobility.*

**Vision:** *We will be an industry leader in providing transportation systems and services that are safe, efficient, promote economic vitality, and use innovative technology. We will achieve quality through:*

- *Investing in our people*
- *Expanding and Enhancing Partnerships*
- *Leading through agency performance; and*
- *Improving our customer service culture*

Following adoption of the mission and vision statements, four separate work groups were established to help the department move forward in the four focus areas specified in the vision statement. One of these groups was charged with developing an action plan to guide ITD in expanding and enhancing partnerships.

## Values and Objectives

ITD exists in an environment that requires regular interaction with a wide range of agencies and stakeholder groups. The department's ability to accomplish its mission and vision depends to a large degree on its success in working with others. ITD recognizes the importance of working collaboratively with other agencies and stakeholder groups (both internal and external) to meet the transportation needs of Idaho's citizens, and is dedicated to building effective partnerships that enhance the department's ability to provide a safe, reliable, and efficient multi-modal transportation system for the citizens of Idaho.

## Baseline System

ITD regularly works with a variety of agencies and stakeholder groups. These entities include, but are not limited to, FHWA, the FAA, counties, cities, local highway districts, tribes, MPOs, other state agencies, developers, construction and engineering contractors, and citizen groups.

A wide range of partnerships are currently in place. These cooperative arrangements have benefitted both ITD and its partners. For example:

- The department has an agreement with the Department of Correction for inmates to perform litter clean-up along selected routes.
- ITD and the Wyoming Department of Transportation assist each other with maintenance work on selected state and federal routes along the border between the states.
- The Department has cooperative agreements with Boise State University, Idaho State University, and the University of Idaho for transportation-related research.

- The department has worked with metropolitan planning organizations and local governments to collect travel time and traffic count data.
- ITD relies on County Assessor and Sheriff Offices to provide many driver licensing and vehicle titling/registration functions

While the department has a lengthy history of working with other organizations, development of partnerships has generally occurred in a piecemeal fashion based on identified needs. Prior to the initiation of the strategic planning process in 2007, the department had not conducted a comprehensive assessment of its existing partnerships or performed a systematic review of the need for new partnerships. In addition, limited partnership training was available to department staff (e.g., processes for establishing partnerships, partner communication, development of partnership agreements, etc.), and the critical importance of partnering had not been clearly articulated by management.

## Desired Target System

The department seeks to take full advantage of any and all partnership opportunities that offer the potential to improve agency performance and reduce costs. The following goals related to expanding and enhancing partnerships were developed through the strategic planning process:

1. Enhance existing partnerships to improve efficiency and customer service.
2. Demonstrate industry through partnerships
3. Expand use of partnerships to broaden cooperation with other agencies and stakeholders (both internal and external).
4. Make effective use of partnerships to leverage limited resources to meet Idaho's transportation needs.

## Practical Implementation

The department has identified a variety of strategies that will be employed to help review and strengthen ITD's partnership effectiveness. Some of the key strategies include:

- **Assessing external and internal satisfaction with partnerships through periodic surveys of ITD partners and agency staff.** Surveys are to be conducted every two to three years. Survey results will be used to identify areas for improvement and monitor performance over time. The results of the surveys will be communicated to ITD staff and stakeholders.
- **Comparing current ITD partnership practices with industry best practices, and identifying needed improvements.** Information about best practices will be gathered through review of applicable literature and by surveying other state DOTs. Focus groups will be held with staff from ITD and partner organizations to identify barriers to effective partnering and recommend needed changes.
- **Identifying opportunities for effective new partnerships.** Surveys of partner organizations and ITD staff will be used to solicit input on potential new partnerships that could be established to improve services and better leverage resources. Information gathered from other states should also generate ideas for potentially beneficial partnerships.
- **Investigating the feasibility of using public-private partnerships to enhance resources and services.** Information about the use of public-private partnerships in other states will be collected and reviewed.

Recommendations will be developed for consideration by Executive Management and the Transportation Board. Draft legislation, sample legal agreements, and other items necessary to proceed with adoption of public-private partnership options will be developed as directed by Executive Team.

- **Developing guidance and training to assist ITD staff in developing and maintaining effective partnerships.** In this area, planned efforts include development of a guidebook that ITD staff can use. Once the guidebook is completed, needed partnership training will be developed.

A number of steps have been taken to begin implementing these strategies. A Partnership Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from each ITD division, was established to guide implementation of the action plan. This committee developed Board and Administrative Policies to encourage effective use of partnerships throughout the ITD. The committee also selected researchers from the Public Policy Center at Boise State University for a study of ITD partnership practices. The project will include 1) a web-based survey of individuals from partner organizations and ITD employees; and 2) focus groups with selected individuals to discuss how ITD can strengthen its partnership efforts. The study, which is being funded through ITD's Research Program, is expected to be completed in January, 2010.